

Hearings on Religious Persecution in China: Lu Siqing Prepared Testimony

March 16, 2000

(Note: These are unedited and uncorrected transcripts)

Honorable Committee Members:

Like

other human rights issues in China, the issue of religious beliefs has been aggravated tremendously for the past year. In particular, after the National People's Congress of China passed a so-called "law against cults" on October 30 of last year, the freedom of religious beliefs in China has been endangered to an unprecedented degree. The Falun Gong spiritual movement that advocates "Truthfulness-Benevolence-Forbearance" is suffering a relentless crackdown that has seen more than five thousand of its followers thrown into forced labor camps. In addition, two mildest Christian family churches in Henan province "China Evangelistic Fellowship" (China Fuyin Tuanqi) and "China Fang-cheng Church" were declared as cults, and their six well-known Christian leaders were sent to labor camps as "cult leaders". Thus, any house church or sect that does not obey the official "three self" churches can be labeled as a cult at any time. Once labeled as a cult, any of its members can be jailed at any time. We believe that this "law against cults" has greatly expanded the legal power of the Chinese communist regime in cracking down on house churches and spiritual movements. It will become the greatest impediment for the future development of religious beliefs and spiritual movements in China. I will analyze in this testimony the recent situation of religions and spiritual movements in China and the reason why the Chinese authorities used the "law against cults" to intensify their crackdown on religious beliefs.

On

October 30 of 1999, the National People's Congress of China passed a "decision on outlawing cult organizations, monitoring and punishing cult activities" (which will be referred to as "law against cult" in abbreviation hereafter). The major content of this "law against cult" is to call on all levels of political and legal organizations to outlaw cult organizations and stop cult activities. Meanwhile, it requires all levels of governments to mobilize and organize the whole society to prevent the development of cults. After the National People's Congress passed this law, the Supreme Court and the Supreme Procuratorate made detailed interpretations of over 20 items concerning its applications

and sentences.

The "law against cults" defines cult organizations as "illegal organizations that use religions, qigong, or other forms to deify their leaders, to spread superstitions and heresy to misguide and cheat others, to recruit and control members, and to endanger society." This definition is very ambiguous. For example, in the eye of the Chinese Communist regime, any respectful propaganda of a religious leader or the founder of a spiritual movement is amount to "deifying the leader". The communists are atheists, who treat the existence of God and the reincarnation in Buddhism as superstition. As to "endanger society", it can be interpreted arbitrarily. Any organizations that do not bow to the order of the Chinese Communist Party can be considered as "being dangerous to society". Therefore, whether or not a religious group or a spiritual movement is a cult is completely up to the decision of the central authorities of the Chinese communist authorities. Any organization that does not cooperate with the Chinese Communist Party can be denounced as a cult at any time by the few leaders of Chinese Communist Party. For example, in December of 1999, Ye Xiao-wen, the head of Bureau of Religious Affairs of the State Council, labeled the Christian "China Evangelistic Fellowship", whose membership exceeded half a million, as a cult in an article titled "the current situation and causes of formation of cults, and the strategies against cults". In last December, the four leaders of that group, Shen Yi-ping, feng Jian-guo, Jing Rong-qi and Wang Jia-sheng, were sentenced to one to three years of forced labor education under the accusation of "sabotaging the implementation of the law by using a cult" in accordance with the "law against cults". The two leaders of "China fang-cheng Group", Zhang Rong-liang and Zheng Shu-qian, were also sent to the labor camps for the same accusation. Obviously, the Chinese communist regime deemed this Christian group with over half a million members as a cult. These two groups shared completely identical doctrines with the mainstream Christian groups overseas. They conducted themselves very mildly with no extreme behaviors. Just before they were cracked down, these two groups were drafting and circulating a belief notice, hoping that it could be accepted by the Christian house churches allover the country in order to unify the doctrines within all the house churches of China, to build a basis for the overseas Christian groups to unify with them, to let the government and the people to understand their stand, and to strictly distinguish themselves from other heretical beliefs and unorthodox opinions. These two groups are typical normal Christian family church groups. If they could be classified as cults, then any family church can be declared as a cult at any time.

The following are the reasons why the Chinese communist regime labeled these two groups as cults. [1] These two groups have close contacts with overseas Christian groups and human rights organizations, while the Chinese communist authorities have always seen the overseas religious groups and human rights organizations as "hostile foreign forces". [2] These two groups have refused to join the official "three self" churches, and they have also appealed to other house churches not to join any activities sponsored by the official "three self" churches. [3] These two groups refused to register with the government department of religious affairs, and they often issue open letters to criticize the official policies on religions, e.g., they considered the official policy that citizens under 18 are not allowed to believe in religions as being against the Bible. [4] These two groups are very prestigious

and influential among the house churches all over the country. Many of their suggestions have been adopted by other house churches.

Besides

"China Evangelistic Fellowship" and "China Fang-cheng Group", the Chinese government has also cracked down on other groups relentlessly including "Quan-fan-wei (Total Scope Church)", "Hu-han (The Shouters) Sect", "Men-tu (The Disciples) Sect", "San-ban-pu-ren (Three Shifts of Servants) Sect", "Bei-li-wang (Established King) Sect", "Dong Fang Shan Dian (Eastern Lightning) Sect", "Zhu-shen (Supreme Spirit) Sect", "Ling-Ling Sect", "Xin-yue Jiao Hui (New Testament Church)", "Jue (Absolute) Sect", "Leng-shui (Cold Water) Sect", "Blood Water and Sacred Spirit Bless Preaching Group" and "Guan Ying School" etc. Except "Guan Ying School", which is based on Buddhism, other groups have all evolved from the Bible. The total number of members of these groups is about 5 million. Among them, "Total Scope Church", "The Shouters Sect", "The Disciples", "Established King", "Eastern Lightning", and "Supreme Spirit" were most influential. These six groups, together with "China Evangelistic Fellowship" and "China fang-cheng Church", have about four million members. Last November, the Chinese Communist Party held a special national meeting and issued an internal document about the "policies on prohibiting, outlawing, and smashing cult organizations". That document summarized four characteristics of the above "cults": [1] Conspicuous reactionary nature; [2] Strong Duplicity; [3] High confidentiality and [4] Tight organization. That meeting called on all levels of party committees and governments to conduct this special campaign to smash the organizational structures of these groups. From the analysis of the Chinese authorities, these so-called "cults" shared a common characteristic of being reactionary, or in other words, being discontent with the Chinese Communist regime and its policies. Therefore, their reactionary nature, i.e., the fact that they do not follow the leadership of the Chinese communist regime, is the most important reason for them to be declared as cults. The nationwide crackdown has been going on for four months. Because the government does not allow the state-run news agencies to report on the crackdown, it is very difficult to obtain the concrete number of the members who have been rounded up. However, on November 19 of 1999, in one 5000 people small Town of Hunan province alone, 75 people of "Total Scope Church" including Liu Gui-hua got arrested during their gathering. Therefore, we have every reason to believe that several thousand people have been arrested all over the country. The "Total Scope Church" is a typical group that refuses to cooperate with the Communist Party and thus was labeled as a cult. The only reason that it was declared as a cult is that the Chinese authorities thought that it was against the Chinese Communist Party. This group was founded in Henan Province in 1985 by the 62-year-old Xu Yong-zhe, who was a well-known leader of house church. Xu was given a sentence of three years of imprisonment in 1997 and is still in custody. A high rank official of religious affairs named Sheng Da-rning commented on this group like this, "they incite their members to be against the leadership of the Chinese communist Party. Their doctrine is to realize the Christianization of the Chinese culture, bless the whole country, and Christianize the churches. They spread reactionary thoughts and have become a hostile political force." The comment of Sheng Da-rning has exposed clearly the real reason why this group was declared as a cult. The arrest of Xu Yong-zhe in 1997 had drawn a lot of attention from the international society at that time as an example of China's persecution against religious leaders for political reasons.

On

October 11 of 1999, the founder of "Supreme Spirit Sect", Liu Jia-guo, was executed in Hunan Province. He was the third sect leader who had been sentenced to death. As early as 1983, the founder of "The Shouters", He En-jie, was sentenced to death for "counter-revolutionary" crime. In 1995, the founder of "Established King", Wu Yang-ming, was also sentenced to death by the authorities. Liu Jia-guo was sentenced to death under the crime of "adultery". "Adultery", as a special criminal term in China, is different from "raping". It means that two people had sexual relationship voluntarily but one person ~ seduces the other using power. According to the law, those who committed "adultery" are to be sentenced to no more than five years in prison. Obviously, Liu Jia-guo was sentenced to death because he was the leader of the "Supreme Spirit Sect". The other leader of the "Supreme Spirit Sect", Zhu Ai-qing, female, was sentenced to seventeen years of imprisonment in last October. This indicated that the real reason for the death penalty of Liu Jia-guo was that he led an anti-government "Supreme Spirit Sect". Both Liu Jia-guo and Wu Yang-ming had been sentenced before for the "counter-revolutionary" crimes of engaging in house churches activities. Therefore, the Chinese communist regime deemed the "Supreme Spirit Sect" and "Established King Sect" they led as hostile forces from the very beginning, and cracked down on them. The Chinese communist regime sentenced Liu Jia-guo to death for the criminal accusation in order to avoid international criticisms. At the same time, this could also give a serious warning to leaders of other groups that had been declared as cults.

Besides

preventing the development of house churches, another important purpose for the Chinese communist regime to pass the "law against cults" is to crack down on spiritual groups like Falun Gong. Although not a religion, Falun Gong must be discussed in addressing the issue of freedom of beliefs. It will greatly improve the freedom of beliefs in China to stop the Chinese government from cracking down on spiritual movements such as Falun Gong.

Falun Gong (also known as

Falun Dafa) is not merely a Qigong exercise for health and fitness by using the physical movements of Qigong and breathing techniques. It teaches practitioners to achieve higher spiritual awareness by following the principle of "Truthfulness- Benevolence-forbearance". It emphasizes improving spirituality and moral values. When almost all the Chinese people, Communist Party members included, no longer believe in communism, values such as "money worship" and "pleasure-seeking" have prevailed society. However, such values could not bring people spiritual satisfaction. Instead, they have made people distrustful of each other. Falun Dafa shares certain similarities with the Chinese Taoism. In the meantime, it also absorbs good elements from the Buddhism. It teaches people to follow the principle of "Truthfulness-Benevolence-forbearance" in their spiritual practice and abolish greed, hatred, jealousy, and I arrogance etc. in order to achieve higher spiritual levels. founded by Mr. Li Hongzhi in 1992, it has since become increasingly popular. According to official statistics at the end of 1999, more than 50 million copies of "Zhuan Falun", the main text of Falun Dafa, had been sold in China. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the number of Falun Gong practitioners in China exceeds 50 million.

The

Chinese communist authorities started an nationwide crackdown on Falun Gong on July 20, 1999. At that time, several hundred contact people of Falun Gong got arrested. On July 22, the Chinese authorities openly denounced Falun Gong as an illegal organization. After that, the Chinese authorities utilized all the state-control propaganda and organization machines to attack and suppress Falun Gong. At that time; the central leaderships headed by Jiang Zemin felt that denouncing Falun Gong as an illegal organization was still not enough for them to use legal means to crack down on Falun Gong. Therefore, the authorities declared Falun Gong as a cult in a meeting held in last September, and ordered the National People's Congress to draft the "law against cults" in order to further crack down on Falun Gong. Since the "law against cults" was passed on October 30 of 1999, more than 300 Falun Gong practitioners have been harshly sentenced to up to 18 years in prison. Meantime, the public security departments have sentenced over 5,000 practitioners to one to three years of forced labor without putting them on trial. The condition in the labor camps is no different than that in jail and might be even worse than the latter. Those detained in labor camps are often forced to work for over 12 hours a day. Besides the 5,000 practitioners in labor camps, between 20,000 and 30,000 practitioners have been detained in the detention centers all over the country. They were detained for a short term for having gone to Beijing to appeal for Falun Gong. Besides being sent to detention centers, several hundred Falun Gong practitioners who are perfectly normal have been thrown into mental hospitals. According to a report by the member of the central leadership, Li Lan-qing, on November 26, 1999, 35,000 practitioners were arrested in Beijing alone from July 20 to November 10. Besides detention, the authorities also persecute Falun Gong practitioners by removing them from their posts, and imposing stiff fines etc. All over the country, tens of thousands of state employees, workers and college students have been removed from their posts or expelled from their schools. Many more practitioners have been fined for up to 20,000 Yuan. In order to deal with Falun Gong, the Chinese authorities even adopted the "extreme leftist" methods that had not been used ever since the Culture Revolution, such as parading Falun Gong practitioners through streets, not allowing practitioners' family members to be admitted by colleges or be employed by state enterprises. It is worth of mentioning that, since last July, several thousand practitioners have sent out letters, faxes and emails to the overseas human rights organizations and media in order to expose their experiences of being tortured and abused while in police custody. These were all verified by investigations. It is a very common phenomenon for Falun Gong practitioners to be tortured during their detention. Up to now, at least ten practitioners have died of torture, hunger strike or other reasons in police custody.

There are also at

least three other groups in the form of Qigong that have been denounced as "cults". They are "Chi Bei Gong (Benevolence Practice)", "Guo Gong (National Practice)" and "Zhong Gong". The full name of "Zhong Gong" is "China life Nurturing and Wisdom Enhancing Practice", founded by Zhang Hong-bao in 1988. The "Zhong Gong" is also a spiritual group. Besides emphasizing qigong exercise, it also advocates using "Qi-ling Philosophy" to guide the practice and elevate the levels. This "Qi-ling philosophy" was founded by Zhang Hong-bao, and it borrows strengths from Buddhism and Taoism and advocates a unique combination of "world view, moral values, ethics, and humanity" etc. At present, "Zhong Gong" has been internally labeled as a cult by the authorities and has been cracked down on a large scale. Since last November, over one hundred

large training bases of "Zhong Gong" across the country have been shut down. Some leaders of "Zhong Gong" have been sentenced. The founder Zhang Hong-bao is missing. He might be secretly jailed.

Many

people are asking such a question: why does the Chinese Communist Party intensify its crackdown on religious and spiritual groups after signing the "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights" in November 1998? As a matter of fact, the purpose of China's signing that Covenant was only to fool the international communities, and to be relieved of burdens of human rights issues. Before then, over one hundred countries had already signed that Covenant, while China, being one of the most important members of the United Nations and a Permanent Member of its Security Council, had not signed that Covenant. Therefore, there were a lot of pressures on China. Signing the Covenant does not mean that the Chinese government is willing to improve its human rights record. This can be confirmed by two facts. First, after China signed the Covenant, the official media has never given due publicity to that Covenant, nor have any newspapers ever analyzed that Covenant. Most Chinese simply do not know the content of that Covenant. In fact, they do not even know that the government has signed that Covenant. Second, after signing the covenant, the Chinese government has not abolished any law or policy such as "forced labor education" that is against the principles of that Covenant. Why recently has the Chinese government intensified its crackdown on religious groups and Falun Gong? It is easy to answer this question if we know the basic stand of the Chinese Communist Party on religions and the current situation of the Chinese society and economy.

There

is a famous saying due to Karl Marx, "Religions are the opium for the masses." Lenin then defined this saying as "the foundation of Marxism worldview on the issue of religions." The basic doctrine of the Chinese Communist Party is Marx-leninism. Therefore, this principle has become the basic stand of the Chinese Communist Party on religions. Thus, the ultimate goal of the Chinese Communist Party on the issue of religions is to eliminate the religions. It is an unchangeable political goal and hidden agenda at any time. Sometimes, the Chinese Communist Party would adopt some lenient policies towards religions for some social reasons or for the need of internal struggles within the Party. However, these policies were expedient measures of a fraudulent nature. In the end, the Chinese Communist Party will return to crackdown on and elimination of religions. This is the most important key to understanding China's policies on religions. In 1982, the Chinese Communist Party issued "the 19th document of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party". The policies stated in that document are still the guiding principles of the Chinese Communist Party on religions. This document fully expounded the idea that religions would be eliminated eventually. It also stated that religions were once a tool of the hostile forces and would be used in the future by the hostile forces. In declaring that the Communist Party members were not allowed to believe in any religions, the document stated, "The communists are atheists. They take materialism as their worldview. Therefore, it is fundamentally incompatible with the religious thoughts that are idealism."

Why

has the Chinese Communist Party intensified its crackdown on Falun Gong recently? The basic reason is that there have appeared a large number of crises in Chinese society and economy. Therefore, the Chinese Communist Party is sparing no efforts to eliminate the perceived threatening forces. The accident bombing of the Chinese Embassy last year and the April 25 Zhongnanhai appeal by over ten thousand people have made the Chinese Communist Party speed up its crackdown.

Since

the massacre on June 4 of 1989, the reform of the Chinese political system has remained stagnated and even gone backwards. Thus a lot of unsolvable problems have been accumulated, which has made more and more people become dissatisfied with the government. Below are some major problems. [1] The corruption and bribery by officials have become widespread and commonplace. The democratic movement in 19a9 was triggered by the severe corruption. Ten years later, however, the corruption has become even more severe. For example, more than one thousand high rank officials were involved in a recently exposed eighty thousand million Yuan smuggling case. [2] The current economy growth of China mainly depends on the foreign or private enterprises along the coast. More than 60% of the state-own enterprises suffer losses. Up to this year, the number of layoff workers has exceeded twenty million. Together with other unemployed workers, the unemployment rate in cities has reached 15%. According to some economists, the condition will become worse and the rate might exceed 18% at the end of this year. [3] The agriculture growth has stopped for the past three years since 1996. At present, about one hundred and forty million farmers of ~ surplus labors could not find employment. The unemployment rate in countryside has exceeded 20%. A large number of village and township enterprises that had thrived in the 80s started to get bankrupted. Currently, the farmers' investment on their land has been decreasing, which has led to the decrease of the yield. The unreasonable taxes imposed on the farmers, however, have increased dramatically. Therefore, the conflicts between the farmers and the local governments have become intensified. [4] There are many other crises in society. For example, it was found that one hundred thousand million Yuan was lost to foreign countries when the "illegally raised funds" and "illegal fund foundations" were investigated. The fact that the money of twenty million people had been swindled triggered a large number of protests. Moreover, the public security has become worse. The current crime rate is five times of that of 20 years ago. According to the statistics of the Public Security Department, the number of big protests occurred in 1998 was about sixty thousand, and it increased to one hundred thousand in 1999. These statistics indicate that there have emerged a lot of crises in China. Therefore, Jiang le-min emphasized that the central task of year 2000 was to maintain the social and political stability, and the chief task to achieve stability was to crack down on "cults".

Why

does the Chinese Communist Party consider Falun Gong and house churches the greatest threats to its grip of power? The reasons are as follows.

[1] Popularity. The Chinese government reported that the memberships of all faiths exceeded one hundred million, including five million of Catholics, twelve million of Christians. Others were members of Buddhism and Islam etc. However, the leaders of the house churches and specialists overseas believe that the number of Catholics exceeds ten million and that of Christians exceeds thirty million. The reason for the discrepancy in estimates is that the official count only includes registered house churches and people who worship in official churches.

However, 80% of the house churches are in the rural areas. Many members do not go to register or disclose their memberships for fear of being persecuted by the authorities. For qigong groups, the Chinese authorities admitted in October of 1999 that the number of practitioners of Qigong exceeded sixty million. Those in qigong community, however, put the figure over one hundred and twenty million. [2] The close contact among the members and the loose structures of religious and qigong groups were considered "having tight organization" by the Chinese communist regime. Currently, several major spiritual groups such as Falun Gong, Zhong Gong and Xiang Gong all have a founder. The practitioners of these groups all respect their founders very much and would like to follow their teachings. These groups have also set up several thousand assistance centers across the country. Members in the same assistance center all know each other. Moreover, the assistance centers maintain contact with each other. These assistance centers and practice sites formed a communication network. In the eye of the Chinese communist authorities, these groups are tight organizations with "core leaders". In the house churches in rural areas, there also appeared many senior and able leaders, whose opinions are respected by other followers. These house churches are also considered organizations with leaders by the Chinese Communist Party, which is paranoid about any organizations beyond its control. Two years ago, the Chinese criminal law has an "anti-revolutionary organization crime" which was to be punished extremely harshly. [3] The closer contact with overseas and the increased influence by the overseas. Several spiritual groups have contact centers in dozens of countries and have many followers overseas. They have a lot of contact with followers in China. Members and leaders of many house "churches" also kept contact with religious groups overseas. With the rapid development of the Internet and communication, the internationalization of the China's economy, the increasing number of tourists going abroad and a large flow of information on the thoughts, cultures, life styles of overseas into China, the thoughts, conceptions, and even political attitudes of the members of spiritual movements and house churches have become closer to Western thoughts and values. The Chinese communist regime is afraid that the normal infiltration of thoughts and values would bring about "peaceful transformation" and be exploited by the hostile foreign forces. [4] The Chinese communist regime believes that the spiritual movements and religious groups are competing against it for ideological front and are corroding the Chinese Communist Party from inside. As more and more Chinese Communist Party members started to practice Falun Gong or believe in religion, the Chinese communist regime feared that the political quality of its members would worsen gradually and there would be less and less of its members who believe in the Marx- Leninism. This, the regime believes, will greatly weaken its ideological education system.

On

April 25 of 1999, over ten thousand Falun Gong practitioners went to Zhongnanhai to appeal peacefully to the authorities. This event was triggered by the slanderous attack by the official media against Falun Gong. It made a stir in the whole world and shocked Jiang Ze-min as well. Jiang Zen-min believed that Falun Gong would become an extremely powerful dissident force if it was not eliminated. In May 1999, there appeared in China an anti-western wave after the NATO's accident bombing of Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia. This event made the Chinese policies completely "left-leaning". Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Chinese communist regime implemented the plan of crackdown that would otherwise be strongly criticized by the international communities. As a result, several hundred political dissidents got arrested. Then on July 20, large-scale crackdown on Falun Gong and house churches started. The Chinese communist regime

wanted to get rid of Falun Gong and other perceived big threats all at once at a time when the United States and other countries were unlikely to condemn the crackdown due to the bombing accident. However, Jiang Ze-min miscalculated on the determination of Falun Gong practitioners about their beliefs. He thought that he would defeat Falun Gong in a very short time by mobilizing the whole Party. What has happened in the past eight months, however, have showed that the determination of Falun Gong practitioners about their beliefs in

"Truthfulness-Benevolence-Forbearance" was far stronger than Party members' beliefs in communism. A large number of Falun Gong practitioners, including officers of people liberation army, armed police officers, public security officers and judges, have gone to Beijing to appeal for Falun Gong although they knew clearly beforehand that they would be jailed. These courageous efforts have fully demonstrated the power of a spiritual movement.

The

"law against cult" passed by the National People's Congress has made it exceedingly easy for the Chinese communist regime to crackdown on spiritual movements and house churches in the name of law. Before that law was passed, if the Chinese communist regime wanted to crackdown on Falun Gong, it could only sentence Falun Gong members for the accusations such as "disturbing social orders", "surrounding and disturbing government departments" and "illegal sales" etc. Since the "law against cults" was passed, however, the situation has changed completely. Any Falun Gong practitioner can be sentenced or sent to labor camps according to the "law against cults" if he/she engages in any activity of defending Falun Gong. In fact, some Falun Gong practitioners were sent to labor camps even for practicing Falun Gong at home. As a matter of fact, the Chinese authorities can throw any.' Falun Gong practitioner who refuses to give up practicing Falun Gong to jailor the labor camp for the accusation of "being a cult member". As to house churches, before, the Chinese authorities could only send those who worship in private houses to labor camps for the accusation of "illegal gathering". After the law was passed, the nature of the problem changed completely. Now, the declaration of a cult was completely based on the subjective judgment of the few individuals in the Chinese central leaderships. Once a church such as "China Bless Group" was denounced as a cult, the several hundred key members of that group can be rounded up at any time as cult leaders. This type of crackdown can be extended to the common members in that group at any time with the accusation of being cult members. Therefore, in today's China, any house church that refuses to cooperate with the Chinese communist regime, refuses to follow the policies of Chinese communist authorities such as "planned birth", maintains contact with churches overseas, or accepts donations from overseas can be labeled as a cult at any time. The "law against cults" passed by the National People's Congress did not state who has the authority to declare a religious group as a cult. Thus, such crucial power fell into the hands of several leaders of the Chinese Communist Party. We should also pay attention to the fact that in every religious group, there are many key members. If a couple of members in a group commit crimes, the Chinese authorities can blame the misconducts of those few members on the whole group, and denounce it as a cult. This is another threat to the freedom of religious beliefs posted by the "law against cults" passed by the National People's Congress.

Honorable
committee members, there were also a large number of problems with

China's crackdown on Tibet Buddhism and Xin-jiang Islam etc. Due to the limitation of space, I can only elaborate on my analysis on spiritual movements and house churches. Currently, western countries are adopting the approach of dialogue with China on the issue of human rights in order to maintain the trade relations with China. However, the dialogue approach was only able to pressure the Chinese communist regime to release a few famous dissidents whom the regime held as hostages, while it is not effective in helping to improve the basic human rights in China. Therefore, we strongly urge different governments to adopt the dual approach of dialogue and condemnation, and strongly condemn any violations of human rights without hesitation. In particular, it is hoped that the proposed censure of China will be passed by the UN human rights conference to be held in March. Only then, can we promote the freedom of religious beliefs in China.

February 24, 2000.

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